Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

Striker Boy

written by

Jonny Zucker

published by

Frances Lincoln Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

CHAPTER 1 – IN THE NET

Nat hit the ball with phenomenal power. The white orb of leather flew forwards, and 30,000 seats in the Ivy Stadium slammed shut as the crowd leapt to their feet.

The ball swept round the opponents' wall.

The goalie saw it late. He was the world's number one keeper – he'd kept a clean sheet for the last twelve matches. He flung his arm desperately but was no match for the sheer force and placement of the strike. He could only brush a tiny area of the ball's surface with his fingertips before it smashed into the back of the net.

The crowd went mad; a huge mesh of green and white – arms waving wildly, fists raised aloft and expressions of ecstatic joy on faces.

The voice of the stadium announcer crashed out from the giant speaker system.

"A goal for Hatton Rangers, scored on thirty-three minutes, by . . . number nine, Nat Cartwright!"

Cheers, whistles and thunderous applause echoed round the stadium.

Nat punched the air with delight, clutched the Rangers logo on his green and white vertically striped shirt and ran to face the giant bank of spectators at the Shipper End. He was a lifelong Hatton Rangers supporter – a local boy made good.

Nat lapped up the adulation and waved his hands, encouraging more. But then suddenly, a single voice cut through the electricity of the moment.

"Nice goal" shouted Nat's dad, "but if we don't get a move on, we'll miss the ferry."

Immediately, the imaginary Hatton Rangers crowd and stadium fizzled into nothingness and Nat was back at the docks of Calais, France.

He waved goodbye to the three French kids he'd been playing with and he laughed as they started arguing amongst themselves about whose turn it was to go in goal next. He grabbed his rucksack off the ground and hurried after his dad. They strolled over to the ferry walkway, showed their tickets and were waved on.

Nat stepped onto the walkway and glanced back one last time at French soil. His body jangled with nerves; he was filled with excitement but also with dread.

After seven years spent travelling the world, he and Dad were finally going home.